

BRUNEL SWIVEL BRIDGE NEWS

MARCH 2026



BRISTOL CITY COUNCILLORS VISIT THE SWIVEL BRIDGE

Bright and early at 8.00am on 5th March Brunel Swivel Bridge Group Trustees met with senior Bristol City Councillors on the site. We regard this as recognition of the importance of the Swivel Bridge restoration to the City of Bristol.

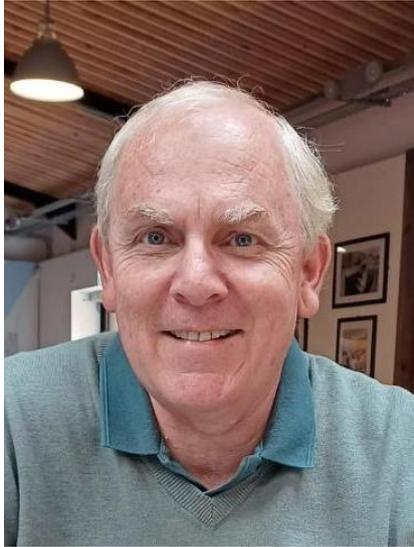
From left to right above are:

Cllr. Andrew Brown, Chair of the Economy and Skills Policy Committee,
David Lockwood, recently appointed Harbour Director,
Ed Plowden, Chair of the Transport and Connectivity Committee,
Iain Boyd, Chair, Brunel Swivel Bridge Group,
Cllr. Tony Dyer, Leader of the Council,
Simon Hickman, Trustee of the BSBG.
Geoff Wallis, the Swivel Bridge Group's Secretary was also present.

Councillors were receptive to our plans and support the issue of a license to the Group to facilitate further restoration work and fund-raising. The license has now been issued and is due to be signed shortly.

We look forward to working with our Green Councillors and Bristol City officers to drive this project forward for the benefit of Bristol's visitors and voters.

WELCOME CHRIS GODDEN ! New Trustee & Treasurer



We are delighted that Chris Godden FCA BFP has joined the Brunel Swivel Bridge Group board as a trustee and Treasurer.

For over two decades Chris owned and directed Blenheim Accounting Ltd, a Bristol-based firm specialising in supporting local family-owned businesses and charities.

Chris has served as a virtual finance director for a number of charities. His experience spans community-focused organisations such as Windmill Hill City Farm—one of the UK's oldest city farms—to national bodies including the Association of Science and Discovery Centres, which represents the country's leading science engagement institutions.

His work has centred on strengthening governance, financial resilience, and long-term sustainability.

Although rooted in finance professionally, Chris has always had a strong interest in engineering, shaped by a family background in mechanical engineering through both his father and brother. Welcome Chris !

FUTURE REQUIREMENT FOR BRUNEL SWIVEL BRIDGE?



Bristol Airport is the largest in the UK **without** a mass transit link with passengers having to drive, get a taxi, coach, or the Airport Flyer bus.

Earlier this year The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) announced that the North Somerset Gateway - which includes Bristol Airport - will be one of the key focus areas in its transport vision.

New public transport links between Bristol city centre and Bristol Airport could include bendy buses, an electric-powered tram or a light railway.

West of England Mayor Helen Godwin said: "Together, we can and must deliver the integrated transport system that people need and deserve."

It is likely that the transport link is likely to pass near the Swivel Bridge. Passengers using it will need to cross the Entrance Lock via the Bridge, so its restoration is important strategically.

BRUNEL'S LOCK IS BEING RE-TIMBERED

Brunel's Lock was completed in 1849 and survives intact but without its lock-gates. The floating 'caisson' gates swung on giant hinges, and were opened and closed by manual capstans. One capstan survives, although it may be a late Victorian replacement.

Swivel Bridge volunteers Peter and Howard are preparing new timbers to replace seriously decayed ones, and hope to fit them on the coming workdays.



These timbers are large, hard, and a challenging shape. Thank you for your skill and hard work Howard and Peter.

CRACKING EXHIBITION GROMIT !

50 YEARS OF AARDMAN IN BRISTOL. A new exhibition

Bristol city museum and art gallery announces *Cracking Exhibition Gromit: 50 Years of Aardman in Bristol* to open at M Shed on 20 June 2026.

This exhibition will offer fans of all ages a behind-the-scenes look at Aardman's creative process, iconic characters, and the studio's deep-rooted connection to Bristol.



Pre-sale tickets for June and July dates are now for sale.

Book at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/m-shed/50-years-aardman/>

Another exhibition, *Inside Aardman: Wallace & Gromit and friends*, is at present at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London until 26 November 2026:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/inside-aardman-wallace-gromit-and-friends> .

HOW YOU CAN HELP RESTORE THE BRIDGE

Join our SUPPORT TEAM. Help research funders and support our busy trustees in other ways. Contact Secretary@brunelswivelbridge.org.uk

JOIN US. Add your name to the hundreds of supporters who receive regular newsletters updating on project progress and developments/events/activities in the area.

VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS. We carry out conservation and maintenance on a Saturday each month, see dates below. Come and join us -- we are friendly, it's fun and you'll get fit!

Children are welcome if continually supervised by a parent or guardian.

DONATE. Please donate via www.brunelswivelbridge.org.uk Better still, help us plan our expenditure by donating monthly. Contact: Treasurer@brunelswivelbridge.org.uk

Your gifts are particularly valuable to the Project as we can re-claim Gift Aid tax at no additional cost to you, and use them as match-funding for the grants we receive.

VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS 2026

Our workdays around the Bridge are nominally on the 3rd Saturday of the month but please check www.brunelsotherbridge.org.uk for changes. Dates for 2026:

March 28th
April 18th
May 16th
June 20th
July 18th
August 15th
September 19th
October 17th.



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